



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Larry Hogan, Governor · Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor · Dennis R. Schrader, Secretary

May 13, 2022

Dear Hospital CEOs and Presidents:

In February 2022, the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) launched a care coordination and referral system pilot that places patients throughout Maryland's health system and helps hospitals manage their psychiatric bed capacity and emergency department backlog.

This pilot is the precursor to the development of the discharge planning coordination unit at MDH. It includes a hotline for hospital emergency department staff who need support identifying available beds for more timely patient referrals. The online inpatient psychiatric bed locator is updated twice daily to provide visibility into available, staffed beds by category — Geriatric, General Adult, Co-Occurring, Adolescent, and Children. Hospital discharge planners can utilize the bed locator to identify available beds across the state.

These systems have been successfully utilized by some hospital discharge planners to facilitate timely patient referrals to available inpatient psychiatric beds. However, our data shows that there are still psychiatric emergency department patients who have not been connected to appropriate care, despite the availability of inpatient psychiatric beds throughout the state.

MDH requests that all hospitals ensure their discharge planners are aware of and use this vital resource. Additionally, hospitals should accept appropriate referrals facilitated through this system for their open, inpatient psychiatric beds.

Hospital discharge planners can contact the care coordination and referral system at (844) 863-2337 and can access the system through this [website](#). Staff may contact bha.inquiries@maryland.gov to receive the username and password.

During this pilot, Sheppard Pratt is supporting MDH to develop the business processes through 2022. We are now focused on completing our design and build out of the key system processes, and then working on automating these processes with software support as necessary. We hope to lay the groundwork for longer-term efforts as we add a care coordination and referral system pilot for 2-1-1, press 4 in addition to the roll out of Maryland's implementation of the federal 9-8-8 mental health hotline in Summer 2022. We are also actively recruiting staff such as clinical placement specialists to complement this care coordination effort.

We look forward to our partnership and welcome your continued support and feedback.

Sincerely,

Dennis R. Schrader
Secretary